BRAILLE BRIDGE: AN INNOVATIVE SYSTEM TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN BLIND PERSON'S

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College : Vivekananda College of Engineering and Technology, Puttur, Dakshina Kannada
Branch : Department of Electronics and Communication
Guide : Prof. Shivaprasad Rao
Student(s) : Ms. Likhitha K
Ms. S Roopa
Ms. Varna S

Keywords:

Braille Communication, Visually impaired, Embedded System.

Introduction:

Braille Bridge is a smart, user-friendly, and affordable communication system designed to empower visually impaired individuals through seamless, real-time interaction. It features a Braille-based input method using manual push buttons connected to a Raspberry Pi, which processes and wirelessly transmits data via Bluetooth. On the receiver end, solenoid switches or servo motors recreate tactile Braille patterns that users can read through touch, allowing independent communication without the need for a sighted assistant. The system also incorporates OLED displays, LEDs, and buzzers to provide multisensory feedback, enhancing usability and reliability. Compact and portable, Braille Bridge is adaptable for use in homes, schools, and public environments. By integrating tactile and auditory technologies, the system promotes inclusivity and equal opportunities, aiming to significantly improve the lives of visually impaired individuals.

Objectives:

- To design and develop an inclusive, user-friendly communication system that empowers visually impaired individuals to interact and communicate effectively.
- To design a user-friendly input system using push buttons, allowing users to represent letters or symbols intuitively without requiring complex training.

- To provide an affordable and accessible solution that can be adopted by organizations, schools, and communities to support visually impaired individuals in their daily lives.
- To contribute to society by fostering inclusivity, empowering visually impaired individuals to communicate independently, and bridging the communication gap between them and the world.

Methodology:

The manual switches on the transmitter side are thoughtfully designed to allow visually impaired users to input Braille characters effortlessly. Each button press is detected by the Raspberry Pi (Tx), which converts the tactile input into digital format. The character or message is simultaneously shown on the OLED screen, allowing real-time verification for accuracy. A Bluetooth module (Tx) ensures wireless, low-latency transmission of the data to the receiver. At the receiver end, the Raspberry Pi (Rx) decodes the data and sends control signals to solenoid switches or servo motors that form precise Braille patterns. These raised dots can be felt instantly, enabling users to interpret messages by touch. LED indicators and buzzers are included on both transmitter and receiver units to aid usability. LEDs provide visual feedback for sighted facilitators, showing status like input, transmission, or reception. The buzzer offers essential auditory feedback for blind users, confirming actions like button presses and message delivery. This dual sensory feedback supports intuitive interaction and independent operation. A stable power supply with battery backup ensures consistent performance even during outages, enhancing portability. The compact design makes it suitable for use in homes, schools, and public areas. By integrating tactile and auditory cues, the system meets the unique needs of the visually impaired. It ensures clear, efficient, and real-time communication. This design enables users to confidently engage in everyday conversations, promoting independence and digital inclusion.

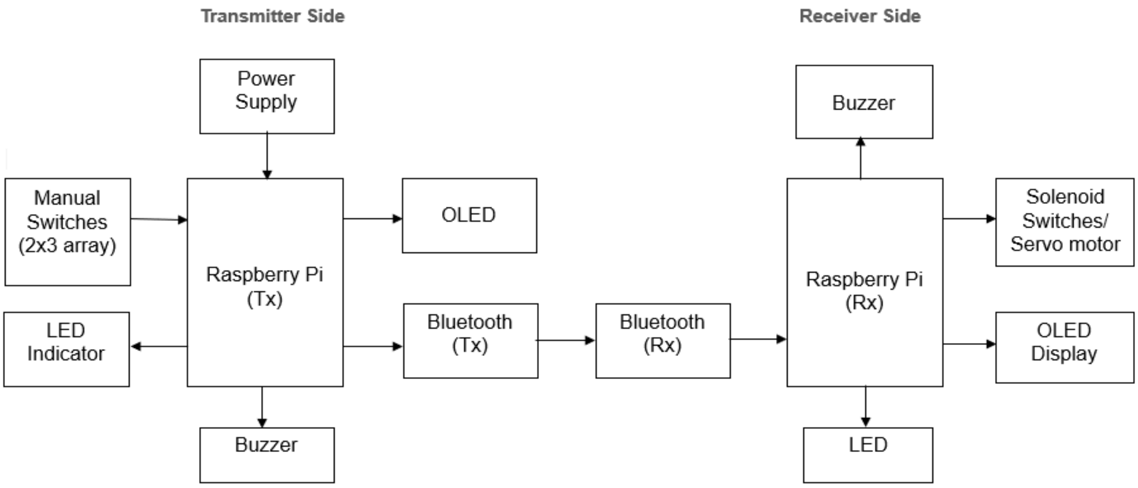

Fig 1. Block diagram of the proposed system

Results & Conclusions:

The Braille Bridge prototype was successfully designed, developed, and tested to demonstrate real-time communication for visually impaired individuals. The system effectively translated button inputs—representing Braille characters—into tactile outputs using solenoid switches or servo motors. These mechanical components accurately formed Braille patterns that users could easily interpret through touch. Testing was carried out in controlled environments where users transmitted messages via the Braille keypad, and the receiver responded instantly, producing corresponding tactile patterns for reading. To further enhance the user experience, OLED displays, LEDs, and buzzers were incorporated. The device proved to be cost-effective, portable, and user-friendly. It operated efficiently using Bluetooth connectivity and required minimal training for users.

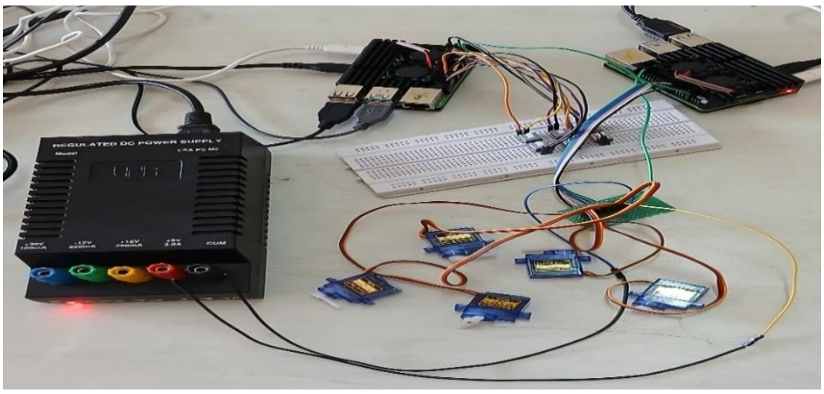

Fig 2. Snapshot from top view

Project Outcome & Industry Relevance:

- Visually impaired individuals can communicate effectively using a tactile-based communication system that delivers messages through Braille patterns.
- A fully functional prototype has been developed, featuring push buttons for Braille character input, Bluetooth technology for wireless data transmission, and solenoid switches or Braille display mechanisms to generate tactile Braille patterns.
- Real-time message transmission and reception are achieved, ensuring smooth and efficient communication.
- The device is portable and user-friendly, enabling visually impaired individuals to use it independently in various settings.
- Wireless communication using Bluetooth modules is successfully implemented, ensuring a reliable and secure connection between the transmitter and receiver units.
- An affordable and scalable solution is provided, suitable for implementation in schools, communities, and households to assist visually impaired individuals.
- The communication gap in society is bridged by offering a tool that fosters inclusivity and independence for visually impaired people.

Working Model vs. Simulation/Study:

The project involved the development of a physical working model. All hardware components, including the Raspberry Pi, push-button Braille keypad, Bluetooth modules, solenoid switches/servo motors, OLED display, LEDs, and buzzers, were assembled and tested to create a functional prototype. The system was physically implemented and demonstrated real-time communication between sender and receiver units, ensuring that the concept was practically viable and not just a theoretical study or simulation.

Project Outcomes and Learnings:

The key outcome of our project is the successful development of a working Braille communication device that enables visually impaired individuals to exchange messages using a tactile interface. The system demonstrated real-time communication using Braille input and solenoid/servo motor based output. This prototype proves that low-cost, assistive technology solutions can be both practical and impactful. Through the process of designing, implementing, and testing this project, we gained hands-on experience in embedded systems design, Raspberry Pi programming, wireless communication (Bluetooth), and interfacing various hardware components. We also learned how to implement Braille encoding and decode it into physical movement using solenoids/servo motors.

Future Scope:

- Implement two-way communication to allow both users to send and receive Braille messages in real-time, enabling natural, interactive conversations.
- Integrate voice-to-Braille and Braille-to-speech functionality using speech recognition and text-to-speech (TTS) modules.
- Develop a mobile application for extended functionalities like message storage, real-time sync, cloud backup, and remote communication via Wi-Fi or internet.
- Miniaturize the hardware to make the device more compact, portable, and user-friendly.
- Design wearable versions such as smart gloves or wristbands for improved comfort and mobility.
- Add support for multi-language Braille systems to serve users of different linguistic backgrounds.
- Optimize the system for lower power consumption to improve battery life and efficiency.
- Enhance the device with touch-sensitive Braille pads for more intuitive input.
- Ensure robust error detection and correction mechanisms for more reliable message transmission.
- Deploy the system in public spaces (e.g., banks, hospitals, transport hubs) to provide independent access to information and services for the visually impaired.
- Explore partnerships with NGOs and accessibility organizations to field-test and refine the system for mass use.